# The Kings MAIESTIES Letter to the Lords Grace of *Canterbury*, touching *Preaching*, and *Preachers*.

MOST Reuerend Father in God, Right trustie and right intirely beloued Councellor, We greet yee well. Forasmuch as the abuse and extrauagancies of Preachers in the Pulpit, haue been at all times represſed in this Land, by some Act of Councell or State, with the aduiſe and reſolution of Graue and Reuerend Preachers, inſomuch as the very licenſing of Preachers, had beginning by order in the Star-Chamber, the eighth of Iuly, in the nineteenth yeare of King Henry the Eight, Our Noble Predeceſſor: And whereas at this preſent diuerſe young Students, by reading of late Writers and vngrounded Diuines, doe preach many times vnprofitable, vnſeaſonable, ſeditious and dangerous doctrine, to the ſcandall of the Church, and diſquieting of the State and preſent Gouernment: Wee, vpon humble preſentation vnto Vs of theſe ill inconueniencies by your Selfe, and ſundrie other Graue and Reuerend Prelates of this Church; as of our Princely care and deſire, for the extirpation of Schiſme and Diſſention growing from theſe ſeedes; and for the ſetling of a Religious and Peaceable Gouernement both of Church and State: Doe by theſe Our ſpeciall Letters ſtraightly charge and command you, to vſe all poſſible care and diligence, that theſe limitations and cautions herewith ſent you concerning Preachers, be duely and ſtrictly from henceforth obſerued, and put in practiſe by the ſeuerall Biſhops in their ſeuerall Dioceſſes within your Iuriſdiction. And to this end Our Pleaſure is, that you ſend them forth ſeuerall Copies of theſe Directions, to be by them ſpeedily ſent and communicated to euery Parſon, Vicar and Curate, Lecturer and Miniſter, in euery Cathedrall and Pariſh Church within their ſeuerall Dioceſſes; and that ye earneſtly require them, to employ their vtmoſt endeauours for the performance of this ſo important a buſineſſe: Letting them know, We haue an eſpeciall eye to their proceedings, and expect a ſtrict accompt thereof both from you and euery of them, and this Our Letter ſhall be your ſufficient warrant and diſcharge in this behalfe.

Giuen vnder Our Signet at Our Caſtle of *Windſor*, the fourth day of *Auguſt*, in the twentieth yeare of Our Reigne of *England*, *France*, and *Ireland*, and of *Scotland* the ſixe and fiftieth.

## *Directions concerning Preachers.*

1 THat no Preacher, vnder the degree and calling of a Bishop, or Deane of a Cathedrall or Collegiate Church, and they vpon the Kings dayes, and set Festiuals, doe take occasion by the expounding of any text of Scripture whatsoeuer, to fall into any set discourse or Common-place (otherwise then by opening the coherence and diuision of his Text) which shall not be comprehended and warranted, in essence, substance and effect, or naturall inference, within some one of the Articles of Religion set forth 1562. or in some of the Homelies set forth by authoritie in the Church of *England*, not onely for a helpe for the *Non*-preaching, but withall for a patterne and abundarie (as it were) for the preaching Ministers, and for their further instructions: for the performance hereof, that they forthwith peruse ouer, and read diligently the said Articles, or the two bookes of Homilies.

2 That no Parson, Vicar, Curate, or Lecturer, shall preach any Sermon or Collation vpon Sunday and Holy-dayes in the afternoone in any Cathedrall or Parish Church throughout the Kingdome, but vpon some part of the Catechisme, or some text taken out of the Creed, tenne Commandements, or Lords Prayer, (funerall Sermons onely excepted) and that those Preachers be most encouraged and approoued of, who spend these afternoone Exercises in examining the children in their Catechisme, and in expounding of the seuerall points and heads of the Catechisme, which is the most auncient and laudable custome of teaching in the Church of *England*.

3 That no Preacher of what title soeuer, vnder the degree of a Bishop or Deane at the least, do from henceforth presume to preach in any populous auditorie, the deepe points of Predestination, Election, Reprobation; of the Vniuersalitie, Efficacie, Resistabilitie, or Irresistabilitie of Gods grace, but leaue those Theames to be handled by the learned men, and that moderately, and modestly, by way of vse and application, rather then by way of positiue doctrine, as beeing fitter for the Schooles and Vniuersities, then for simple auditories.

4 That no Preacher of what title or denomination soeuer, shall presume from hence forth in any auditorie in this Kingdome, to declare, limit, or bound out by positiue doctrine, in any Lecture or Sermon,

Sermon, the Power, Prerogatiue, Iuriſdiction, Authoritie, or Duty of Soueraigne Princes; or otherwiſe meddle with theſe matters of State, and the references betweene Princes and the People, then as they are inſtructed and preſidented in the Homilie of obedience, and in the reſt of the Homilies and Articles of Religion, ſet forth as is before mentioned by publike authoritie; but rather confine themſelues for thoſe two heads, Faith and good Life, which are the ſubiect of auncient Sermons and Homilies.

5 That no Preacher of what title or denomination ſoeuer, ſhall cauſleſly, and without inuitation from the Text, fall into bitter inuectiues, and vndecent rayling ſpeeches, againſt the perſons of either Papiſt or Puritan, but modeſtly, and grauely when they are inuited or occaſioned thereunto by their text of Scripture, free both the Doctrine and Diſcipline of the Church of *England*, from the aſperſion of either Aduerſarie, eſpecially where the auditorie is ſuſpected to be tainted with the one or the other infection.

6 Laſtly, the Archbiſhops and Biſhops of this kingdome (whom his Maieſtie hath good cauſe to blame for their former remiſnes) be more warie and choice in licenſing Preachers, and reuoke all grants made to any Chancellor, Officiall, or Commiſſary to licence in this kind. And that all the Lecturers throughout the kingdome (a new body ſeuered from the auncient Clergie of England, as beeing neither Parſon, Vicar, nor Curate) be licenſed henceforth in the Court of faculties, onely vpon recommendation of the party from the Biſhop of the Dioceſſe, vnder his hand and ſeale with a *Fiat* from the L. Archbiſh. of *Canterbury*, and a confirmation of the great ſeale of *England*: and that ſuch as tranſgreſſe any of theſe directions, bee ſuſpended by the L. Biſh. of the Dioceſſe; in his default by the L. Archbiſh. of the prouince, *ab Officio & Beneficio*, for a yeare and a day, vntill his Maieſtie by aduice of the next Conuocation ſhall preſcribe ſome further puniſhment.

# The Lord Archbishop of *Canterburie* his Letters to the Bishop of the Diocesse of *Norwich*.

MY very good L. I doubt not but before this time, you haue receiued from me the Directions of His most excellent Maiesty concerning Preaching and Preachers, which are so graciously set downe, that no godly or discreet man, can otherwise then acknowledge, that they doe much tend to edification, if he doe not take them vpon report, but do punctually consider the tenor of the words as they lie; and doe not giue an ill construction to that, which may receiue a fairer interpretation. Notwithstanding, because some fewe Churchmen, and many of the People haue sinisterly conceiued (as we doe here find) that those Instructions doe tend to the restraint of the Exercise of Preaching, and doe in some sort abate the number of Sermons, and so consequently by degrees, doe make a breach to let in Ignorance and Superstition: His Maestie in his Princely wisdome hath thought fit, that I should aduertise your Lordship of the graue and waighty reasons which induce His Highnesse to prescribe that which is done. You are therefore to know, That His Maestie being much troubled, and grieued at the heart, to heare euery day of so many defections from our Religion, both to Poperie and Anabaptisme, or other points of Separation in some parts of this Kingdome, and considering with much admiration, what might be the cause thereof, especially in the Reigne of such a King, who doth so constantly professe himselfe an open Aduersary to the superstition of the one, and madnesse of the other: His Princely wisdome could fall vpon no one greater probabilitie, then the lightnes, affectednes, and vnprofitablenesse of that kind of Preaching, which hath been of late yeares too much taken vp in Court, Vniuersitie, Citie, and Countrey. The vsuall scope of very many Preachers, is noted to bee a soaring vp in points of Diuinitie, too high for the capacities of the people, or a mustering of much reading, or displaying of their wit, or an ignorant medling with Ciuill matters, aswell in the priuate of seuerall Parishes & Corporations, as in the publike of the Kingdome: or a venting of their owne distastes, or a smoothing vp of those idle fancies, which in this blessed time of so long a peace, doe boyle in the braines of vnaduised people. And lastly,

ly, by an euill and vndecent rayling, not onely against the Doctrine (which when the Text shall occasion the same, is not onely approoued, but much commended by his Maiestie) but against the persons of Papists and Puritanes. Now the people bred vp with this kind of teaching, and neuer instructed in the Catechisme and Fundamentall points of Religion, are for all this aiery nourishment, no better then abraſæ tabulæ, new Table-books, ready to be filled vp either with the Manuals or Catechismes of Popish Priests, or papers and pamphlets of Anabaptists, Brownists, and Puritanes. His Maestie euer calling to mind that saying of Tertullian, Id verum quod primum,, and remembring with what doctrine the Church of England in her first and most happy reformation, did driue out the one, and kept out the other from poisoning and infecting the people of this Kingdome, did find that the whole scope of this Doctrine is contained in the Articles of Religion, the two Bookes of Homilies, the lesse and the greater Catechisme, which his Maiestie doth therefore recommend againe in these Directions, as the proper subiect of all sound and edifying Preaching. And so farre are these Directions from abating, that his Maiestie doth expect from our hands, that it should encrease the number of Sermons, by renewing vpon euery Sunday in the afternoone in all Parish Churches throughout the Kingdome, the primitiue and most profitable exposition of the Catechisme, wherewith the people, yea very children may be timely seasoned & instructed in all the heads of Christian Religion. Which kind of teaching (to our amendment be it spoken) is more diligently obserued in all the reformed Churches of Europe, then of late it hath bin here in England. I find his Maiesty much mooued with this neglect; & resolued, that if wee which are his Bishops do not see a reformation hereof (which I trust wee shall) to recommend it to the care of the Ciuill Magistrate, so far is he from giuing the least discouragement to solid Preaching, and Religious Preachers.

To all these I am to adde, that it is his Maesties Princely pleasure, that both the former Directions, and these reasons of the same, bee fairely written in euery Registers Office. To that ende, that euery Preacher of what denomination soeuer, may if he be pleased take out Copies of either of them with his owne hand gratis, paying nothing in the name of Fee, or Expedition. But if he doe vse the paines of the Register his Clerks, then to pay some moderate Fees, to be pronounced in open Court by the Chancellor and Commissaries of the place, taking the direction and approbation of any the Lords the Bishops.

Lastly, that from henceforth a course may be taken, that euery Parson, Vicar, or Curate, or Lecturer, doe make exhibite of these his Maesties

directi-

directions and rules of the same, under your Visitation of the Bishops and Archdeacons paying to the Register by way of Fee two pence only for the entring of the subscribe.

And so praying God to bless your Lordship and in his Christian Name requiring your Lordsh. to have a special and extraordinary care of the premisses I leave you to the Almighties Protection. From Croidon, Sept. 4. 1622.

Your louing Brother,

G. Cant.